

THE HOLOCAUST

The official definition of the Holocaust according to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:

...the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945.

The Nazis, who came to power in Germany in January 1933, believed that Germans were "racially superior" and that the Jews, deemed "inferior," were an alien threat to the so-called German racial community.

BEGINNING IN 1939,

Jews in Nazi Germany and German-occupied countries were forced to wear an identifying badge which often took the form of a yellow Star of David.



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GEORGIA COMMISSION ON THE HOLOCAUST

WITNESS TO THE HOLOCAUST

DURING WORLD WAR II

the United States Army was, like much of the nation itself, segregated. As a soldier of an all-black battalion, William Alexander Scott III (“W.A.” as he was known) and his comrades were fighting for rights they themselves could not enjoy. This fact was magnified as the Allies began to witness first-hand the treatment of the Jewish people and other targeted groups in camps such as Buchenwald.

Because my father witnessed the horrors of the Holocaust and was experiencing the injustice of racial discrimination back at home, he was determined to do what he could to change things....He realized, in coming back to combat it here, that you cannot fight hate with hate. Hate only begets more hate.

— Alexis Scott, publisher of *The Atlanta Daily World* newspaper and the daughter of “W.A.”

BUCHENWALD was one of the largest camps established within German borders, about 185 miles southwest of Berlin. It was opened by the SS in July of 1937.

The first prisoners were political opponents of the Nazi party. However, after Kristallnacht (the “Night of Broken Glass”, a pogrom targeting Jewish businesses and synagogues in Germany and Austria) nearly 10,000 Jewish males were arrested by the SS and German police then sent to the camp. Jehovah’s Witnesses, Gypsies (Roma and Sinti), resistance fighters, former government officials from occupied countries, criminals, “asocials” and German military deserters were incorporated into the internment system of the camp. Women began arriving in late 1943 and early 1944.

The camp was liberated on April 11, 1945, by US forces. More 21,000 people were in the camp. (Above: American soldiers and liberated prisoners at the main entrance of the Buchenwald concentration camp. Germany, May 1945.)



Image: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Medical experiments were performed on prisoners by physicians and scientists beginning in 1941. The majority of these experiments were designated for finding cures to contagious diseases such as typhus, typhoid, cholera, and diphtheria, all of which were common in concentration camps as a result of the terrible conditions.

Typhus in particular, which was spread by lice, claimed many lives including that of Anne Frank who died at Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in March of 1945.

(Above: Anti-Semitic poster from Poland — “Jews are lice; they cause typhus.”)